

Dronfield and District u3a Executive Committee

Minutes of Executive Meeting held at 09.30hrs on 23rd March 2026 at the Civic Hall – DRAFT 1
 Approved 20 April 2026

Present Julia Harris (JH)
 Karen Grad (KG)
 Ed Green (EG)
 Terry Goodyear (TG)
 Steve Wood (SW)
 Marion Clyde (MC)
 Andy Baldwin (AB)
 Yvonne Bramall (YB)
 Angela Richards (AR)

Item	Discussion	Action
1	JH welcomed everyone to the meeting including Phine Wright (PW) who was attending to participate in Item 4 of the Agenda	
2	No apologies received	
3	1 conflict of interest reported - SW as a member of the History group – Agenda item 4	
4	<p>Emergency Item – Peel Centre Risk Assessment Concerns This was taken as an emergency item at the start of the meeting to allow PW to contribute to the discussion before departing. The report circulated by AB and AR following their Risk Assessment visit to the Peel Centre highlighted several serious concerns. This was of immediate relevance to the History Group, whose next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, hence the attendance of Phine Wright who is coordinator of this group. A lengthy and thorough discussion took place. All findings in the report were considered. AR expressed a very strong view that the meeting on Wednesday should not proceed, explaining the reasoning and noting relevant advice from the recent regional u3a meeting. PW explained that relocating the History Group was not feasible, and confirmed that the group operates in line with u3a RA guidelines and that no members were being placed at risk. MC noted that while some issues were significant, others were manageable and could be addressed. Alternative venues were discussed, but none were found to be suitable.</p> <p>Actions Agreed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW to review and discuss the report at the History Group planning meeting. • Executive Committee to identify what needs addressing, by whom, and within what timeframe, in order to mitigate the highlighted risks. • All other groups using the room to be made aware of the concerns. • An email to be sent to all u3a members outlining the Committee’s concerns regarding continued use of this room. <p>Conclusion Following these actions, a vote was taken on whether this Wednesday’s History Group meeting should go ahead. Result: 2 against, 6 in favour (SW abstained due to a conflict of interest).</p> <p>Attached to these minutes is a statement from AB & AR written after the meeting.</p>	<p>JH</p> <p>JH</p>

5	Minutes of Executive Meeting held on 23 rd March 2026 were accepted as a true record.	
6	Matters arising from minutes – None	
7	The Action Log was reviewed and amended where appropriate to record progress. All changes were recorded by SW and will be circulated for comment/approval separately to these Minutes.	SW
8(a)(i)	Chairs Report. Resignation: The Committee accepted Steve Bradbury's resignation from the Sub-Finance Committee and recorded its thanks for his considerable contribution over previous years. Role of Auditor: It was noted that, while the Charity Commission does not require the appointment of an auditor, HMRC does. Action: JH will email SB to convey the Committee's thanks and to ask whether he would be willing to continue in the role of Auditor. Terms of Reference: During discussion, the Committee agreed that Terms of Reference should be developed for all sub-committees.	JH
8(b)	Treasurer's Report Reserves: The Committee discussed the financial reserves, including the rationale for holding them and the amount held. A decision will be made in November regarding this.	
8(b)(i)	Gift Aid Guidance: MC outlined the potential impact of the new Gift Aid guidance, noting that Dronfield u3a may lose some Gift Aid income. The main area of concern relates to Joint Memberships and how these are treated under the revised rules. The Committee agreed to take no immediate action but to contact TAT for clarification regarding Joint Memberships. Gift Aid Declaration: MC noted that the current Gift Aid declaration form needs to be reviewed to ensure compliance with the new TAT guidance. Existing forms will continue to be used for the upcoming renewal cycle, but updated versions will be created thereafter. Volunteers for renewals meeting needed.	MC MC AR/EG
8(c) i	Secretary Report. Review of Group Coordinators Guidance MC will circulate her amendments to this for review, so that the updated version can be approved at next month's meeting.	MC
8(d) i	Groups / Publicity Reports Publicity - Storage requirements for u3a equipment discussed. No resolution reached. Item to be continued at the next meeting. The Committee briefly discussed the potential use of paid 'Teachers' for groups, with reference to TAT's guidance. Further consideration was deferred to the next meeting.	
8(e)	Membership AR confirmed that the normal pre renewal emails had been sent to all members. A small number of members have advised, for various reasons, that they will not be renewing.	
8(f) i	Beacon & Website Zoom Licence:	

	MC confirmed that she has now obtained access to the 50% discount available through the Goodstack Service Organisation. She will now try to renew the Zoom licence using this discount. MC explained that Paul Harris, the new website editor, will need access to Beacon. Committee agreed. MC to speak with PH	MC MC
8(g) i	Use of YouTube at Monthly Meetings: The Committee discussed the potential use of YouTube as an alternative platform to Zoom for monthly meetings. Concerns were raised regarding copyright compliance, it was agreed that the proposal should be deferred for consideration at a later date.	
8(h) i	Health & Safety Report RA – see item 4 AB reported that 2 of the 4 new volunteer First Aiders had completed their training and now have their certificates.	
8(i)	YB & AR were thanked for their attendance and subsequent reports from the regional meetings.	
9	Any Other Business – None	
10	Action Log up-dates confirmed and agreed. Items will be circulated separately from the Minutes for information/comment	SW
11	Items for Next Meeting: Risk Assessment Peel Centre. Group Coordinators Guidance for approval. Storage requirements for u3a equipment. Terms of Reference for sub committee's Paying 'Teachers' for groups. Succession Plan.	KG
12	Executive items for Bulletin/Cryer/Website: Peel Centre Risk Assessment - Bulletin	JH
13	Next meeting 0930hrs on Monday 20 th April 2026 at the Civic Centre, Council Chamber	

Karen Grad 23/03/26

Statement from AB & AR following the meeting

Following the fire-safety inspection of the upper floor at the Peel Centre carried out on 5 March by Andy Baldwin and Angela Richards, we identified several significant deficiencies relating to safe evacuation in the event of fire. These were detailed in our report submitted to the Dronfield & District u3a executive meeting held on 23 March.

Based on these findings, we recommended that the upper floor should not be used for u3a activities until the issues are rectified.

The committee has decided to continue using the upper floor while mitigation measures are considered or implemented over time. For the avoidance of doubt, we wish it to be formally recorded that:

- we do not consider continued use of the upper floor to be compliant with our duty of care as trustees.
- we cannot endorse the decision to continue using the space in its current condition.
- Responsibility for the decision to proceed rests with the committee as a whole.

While we respect the committee's decision, we wish to formally record our concern that continuing to use the upper floor without immediate remedial action may expose the u3a, its members, and the trustees to unnecessary risk.

While we acknowledge the committee's intention to "mitigate risks over time," We remain deeply concerned that the current interim situation does not sufficiently address the potential danger to our members. As trustees, we have a collective legal and moral "duty of care" under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

To ensure transparency and accountability, we request that the committee provide written confirmation of how the u3a will ensure the safety of all users in the interim.

We also recommend that the committee confirm with our insurers that continuing to use the premises will not invalidate our public liability insurance. Should an incident occur, the u3a and its trustees may face legal and financial consequences if it is found that known risks were not addressed promptly.

To further clarify the risks and ensure compliance with fire safety regulations, we recommend that the committee arrange for an independent inspection of the premises by the local fire service or a qualified fire safety professional. This will provide an authoritative assessment of the risks and any necessary actions, and will help the u3a make an informed decision about the continued use of the space.

We request that this statement is included in the minutes of the meeting and retained with the risk-assessment documentation.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Baldwin,
Angela Richards,
Trustees, Dronfield and District u3a

23 March, 2026

Emergency u3a Committee Meeting held via zoom on Wednesday 25th March 7.30pm

Approved 20 April 2026

Present: Julia Harris (JH), Karen Grad (KG), Ed Green (EG), Marion Clyde (MC), Yvonne Bramall (YB)

Apologies: Terry Goodyear (TG), Steve Wood (SW)

JH thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting was convened urgently due to the resignations of two committee members, Angela Richards (AR) and Andy Baldwin (AB), which followed the committee's vote on whether the upstairs room (the Edward Lucas Hall) in the Peel Centre should be used for any u3a meetings and in particular for the History Group meeting on 25/03/26. – see Minutes 23rd March – item 4.

Written comments were received from Terry Goodyear (TG) and Steve Wood (SW) who were unable to attend.

JH read out AR's resignation email, AB's resignation letter had previously been emailed to everyone.

Discussion took place concerning the following:

The Vote

Those present agreed that we are a committee working together as a team and having made an informed decision we stand by our vote.

Risk Assessments are all about identifying and mitigating risks. The Committee had decided by a majority vote on the 23rd March to do more investigation into how the concerns and risks identified by AB and AR could be mitigated. Nonetheless, we respect the decision reached by AR and AB.

All discussions and decisions concerning this have been formally minuted, and a full paper trail is in place.

The Peel Centre

MC began by explaining she had visited the Peel Centre that morning and found comments book/ accident log/signage was visible/stairs were clear.

SW's very useful written observations from his own visit earlier in the day were also noted.

A number of the concerns raised previously have already been addressed by the History Group planning committee. They have already met with the caretaker, who will be passing the points raised on to the Peel Centre Trustees. Additional signage has already been installed by the History group, with further signs planned. Fire extinguishers are now clearly visible, and the dates on which the First Aid boxes are checked will be displayed going forward.

Preliminary research by MC had indicated that there is no legal requirement for a Fire Certificate to be displayed, though this needs further investigation. The Peel Centre trustees should be

asked to confirm when the last Fire Risk Assessment was done. Reference was made to the Peel Centre's Terms and Conditions, which state that the Hirer is responsible for conducting a Risk Assessment, ensuring Fire Safety, and having an evacuation plan. As the building is unstaffed, these responsibilities fall solely to us.

Importantly, we now need to urgently work on the venue Risk Assessment that MC circulated previously, and group coordinators will need to be told that they must have their own evacuation plans in place when using the room, as the History group does.

JH had been in touch with TAT for advice – confirmed that if we cannot mitigate the concerns then we may need to stop using the room for any u3a meetings.

A query was raised about the geography group's next meeting; JH advised that she had already contacted the coordinator, outlined the current situation, and suggested an alternative venue. A response is awaited.

Resignations

Both resignations have been acknowledged and those present all agreed they will be very much missed on the committee.

Concern was raised and discussed about the forthcoming Renewals meeting.

It was confirmed AR if she was willing could still be Membership Secretary without being a Trustee – JH to email her to ask.

Actions to be taken

The Safety Concerns list created by JH after Monday's exec meeting needs further editing by all. SW has already added his responses after his visit today.

JH to email both AR and AB to ask if they are happy to continue with their other roles.

EG will email the members due to support the renewals meeting to confirm they are still willing to help.

Peel Centre RA needs further urgent attention.

Meeting ended 8.25pm

Karen Grad 25.03.26